



Peekaboo by NotMarge

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Summary: They used to play this game all the time. And he always came back to her. And he will this time too. Joyce Byers thinks back as she prepares to reach out for her son.

Peekaboo

I do not own Stranger Things, 2016.

But I am owned by children. Can you tell? ;)

Peek-a-boo

They used to play this game, this silly little game when he was a baby.

His favorite game. His first game. His *only* game for a while there.

Peek-a-boo.

She would sit with him, cooing and talking and playing.

And as soon as she reached way up high in the air, wiggling her fingers . . .

"Tic-*kle* . . . tic-*kle* . . ."

. . . her clever little baby would giggle, grab the nearest cloth, usually covered in drool.

And fling it over his head.

She would stop just as suddenly.

Contort her happy, animated expression into one of confusion. Put on her most-innocent-voice-in-all-the-world tone. Almost girlish in its own quality.

"Will?"

Pretending he had inexplicably disappeared from view.

"Will? Where'd you go?"

Looking all around. Under toys. Behind pillows.

Even staring right at him, pretending she couldn't see him.

And he would grin in amusement at her lack of ability to find him, the clever boy.

And he would *try* to keep in his giggles, even holding his breath for a few seconds.

But then his baby nature would break forth and he would giggle.

That baby boy giggle.

The best sound in the whole world.

And she would start, as if hearing the sound but still unable to see the maker himself.

"Will? Will? Where's Will?" she asked insistently, an expression of wonder upon her face. "I can *hear* him but I can't *see* him. Where'd he go?"

Sometimes if he held out long enough, she'd pout as if about to cry.

"I miss Will. I wish he'd come back."

And that'd be it, the one thing he couldn't stand.

He'd cling off the cloth with a baby exclamation . . .

"Gah!"

. . . of surprise.

And she'd cheer . . .

"Oh *there's* my boy! My sweet, clever boy! I missed you! I'm glad you're back!"

. . . and laugh and smile.

And scoop him up in her arms, covering him with smooches.

Then set him down to begin again.

Or play another game.

Or whatever.

Now, Will was older. They didn't play games together so much.

She was always working.

He was at school, off with his friends.

It just naturally didn't happen as much.

But now the wheel had turned back around.

He was gone.

He was hiding.

From some dark entity that scared him so much his physical presence wasn't even a part of him anymore.

But he was here.

In this house.

In its walls.

In its air.

Or something.

Playing the greatest game of Peek-a-boo ever.

Nobody believed her.

Everybody thought she was crazy.

And she just might be.

But that didn't make her any less right.

The phone calls proved it.

The tangle of Christmas lights earlier had proved it.

Her *heart* proved it.

Her son was out there. In here. Somewhere.

And she would find him.

She *would*.

Because that was her job as his mother.

"I'm coming, Will," she muttered to herself, unaware that she was even speaking aloud. "Just hold on, baby. I'm coming."

Joyce Byers wiped a trembling hand across her haggard, sweat-sheened face.

And continued stringing the multi-colored Christmas lights.

Because she had an idea.

One that just might let her reach out to her son.

Communicate with him.

Find a way to save him, bring him back.

And nothing was going to stop her.

"Just a little while longer, Will. I'm coming. Just hang on."

Nothing.

Hello, welcome to my new TV addiction! Don't know how much I'll write for it but this one just demanded to be written.

So, anyway, hope you enjoy.

Everybody appreciates feedback. Leave a review if you like.